

VZCZCXRO4988
RR RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHNR #2545/01 3580929
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 240929Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0288
INFO SOMALIA COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEILB/NCTC WASHINGTON DC
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
RUZEFAA/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002545

SIPDIS
STATE FOR AF/E, AF/RSA AND A/S CARSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/12/24
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SO](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [MARR](#)
SUBJECT: Somalia - December 3 Suicide Attack Deepens Long-Standing
Intra-Shabaab Divisions

CLASSIFIED BY: Robert Patterson, Counselor for Somalia Affairs, State
Department, Somalia Unit; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Long-standing intra-Shabaab tensions, apparently exacerbated by the December 3 suicide bombing in Mogadishu, were brought to the surface in late December when al-Shabaab faction leaders began to publicly voice their internal disagreements about the way forward in Somalia. Our contacts tell us that factions loyal to Ahmed Abdi Godane (Abu Zubeyr) and factions loyal to Mukhtar Robow (Abu Mansur) and al-Shabaab spokesman Ali Dhere are the tips of the iceberg in the multi-factional affiliation. Godane reportedly condones suicide bombings, is seeking a closer relationship with foreign fighters, and wants to now announce an Islamic caliphate in Somalia. Several other al-Shabaab leaders think the December 3 suicide bombing represented a bridge too far, are uncomfortable with the influence of foreign fighters in their midst, and think the time is not right to proclaim an Islamic caliphate. Important clan and regional realities underlie ideological divides within al-Shabaab. While it is premature to predict exactly how all al-Shabaab factions will line up, we think deepening al-Shabaab divisions present local, regional and TFG leaders with an opportunity to capture the interests of much of the al-Shabaab rank and file and possibly some al-Shabaab top leadership. Simultaneously, the TFG has an opportunity to militarily target Godane and other top al-Shabaab leaders unlikely to be co-opted by local interests. End summary.

¶2. (S) Our contacts tell us that factions loyal to Ahmed Abdi Godane (Abu Zubeyr) and factions loyal to Mukhtar Robow (Abu Mansur) and al-Shabaab spokesman Ali Dhere represent some of the deepest divides in the multi-factional affiliation. Godane reportedly condones suicide bombings, is seeking a closer relationship with foreign fighters, and wants to now announce an Islamic caliphate in Somalia. Our contacts tell us that al-Shabaab leader al-Afghani also appears aligned with Godane for now. (Note: Godane, long-affiliated with al-Qaeda operatives in East Africa, was a close associate of Aden Ayrow. Ayrow was involved in the 1998 bombings of U.S. Embassies in East Africa and in May 2007 was killed by a U.S. air strike inside Somalia. End note.)

¶3. (C) Several other al-Shabaab leaders reportedly think the December 3 suicide bombing represented a bridge too far, are uncomfortable with the influence of foreign fighters in their midst, and think the time is not right to proclaim an Islamic caliphate. Our contacts tell us that al-Shabaab factions loyal to Mukhtar Robow (Abu Mansur) and al-Shabaab spokesman Ali Dhere think al-Shabaab is being hijacked by a foreign agenda and told Godane they need to gain greater popular support before announcing a

caliphate. Some contacts tell us Robow and Dhere may be even further apart from Godane than their statements indicate but that the al-Shabaab leaders fear assassination by Godane if they do not continue to proclaim their intention to move toward a caliphate. (Note: Press reports indicate some factions who disagree with Godane may be using the name Millat Ibrahim, translated as "the religious community of Abraham". End note.)

¶4. (C) Important clan and regional realities underlie ideological divides within al-Shabaab. Contacts within the Hawiye and Rahanweyne clans tell us al-Shabaab leaders from those clans are feeling stepped up clan pressure after the December 3 suicide bombing in Mogadishu. A well placed Hawiye/Habr Gedir/Ayr contact told us al-Shabaab leaders are being shamed by the clan because many Hawiye and Rahanweyne, constituting much of the population of Mogadishu, suffered as a result of the December 3 attacks. (Note: Godane would probably not face clan pressure in Mogadishu because he is from the northern Isaq clan. End note.) In addition, Robow and Godane have long disagreed over many issues, particularly over the degree to which Robow negotiates with his Rahanweyne clan.

¶5. (C) Multiple contacts from several Somali regions tell us there are additional divisions between "local" al-Shabaab administrations who are from the clan of a given region and top al-Shabaab leadership who periodically come into a town to ensure

NAIROBI 00002545 002 OF 002

that the leaders there are sufficiently al-Shabaab. Our contacts tell us that the "local" al-Shabaab leaders often held governance positions in their areas before being deputized by top al-Shabaab leadership. (Note: Press reporting indicates al-Shabaab has split into two factions. We think that this version of events implies there was once a cohesive al-Shabaab, a premise we consider inaccurate, and that oversimplifies the current nature of divisions. End note.)

¶6. (C) Comment: While it is premature to predict exactly how all al-Shabaab factions will line up, we think deepening al-Shabaab divisions present local, regional and TFG leaders with an opportunity to capture the interests of much of the al-Shabaab rank and file and possibly some of al-Shabaab's top leadership. Simultaneously, the TFG has an opportunity to militarily target Godane and other al-Shabaab leaders who are unlikely to be co-opted by local interests.
RANNEBERGER